

**THE
FEDERAL
VOTING
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM**

Fourteenth Report



December 1993

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Assistance
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This Report has been prepared by the staff of the
Federal Voting Assistance Program, Office of the
Secretary of Defense, Washington D.C.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) administers the Federal responsibilities of the Presidential Designee (Secretary of Defense) under the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986. This Act covers all members of the Armed Forces and eligible dependents, Merchant Marine and dependents, and all U.S. civilian citizens outside the United States - approximately six million potential voters. This report corresponds to activity for the period 1988 through 1992. The survey of military personnel produced statistics which are both weighted and unweighted. The unweighted statistics reflect a voting participation rate for 1992 of 81%. The weighted statistics reflect a participation rate of 67%. Both are significant increases over the 1988 participation rates. Since weighted statistics for military personnel were used exclusively in previous reports and since comparisons will be made with previous reports, the weighted statistics will be used for comparative purposes.

- Voting by military personnel increased to 75% in 1992 and an additional 6% attempted to vote absentee for a total participation rate of 81% (67% weighted), compared to 64% in 1988. Participation by the general public in the 1992 election was 55%.
- Voting participation by the military in 1990, a non-Presidential election year, was 40% compared to 19.9% in 1986, the preceding non-Presidential election year. Voting participation by the general public in 1990 was 36.4%.
- Voting by federal civilian employees overseas increased to 72% in 1992 and an additional 7% tried to vote absentee for a total voting participation rate of 79%. This represents a 15 percentage point increase from the 1988 participation rate of 64%. (See page Chart 1, page 11)
- Voting by other civilian citizens overseas was 27% and an additional 5% tried to vote absentee for a (rounded) total voting participation rate of 31%. (See Chart 1, page 11)
- Local election officials report that absentee ballots continue to represent a considerable portion of total votes cast in 1992. The median absentee percentage was 6%, and the mean was 10%, unchanged from 1988.
- Satisfaction with the voting assistance obtained was generally high and especially high among absentee voters.
- Use of the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) form continues to be the primary method to register and request an absentee ballot. Of those who applied for a ballot in the 1992 general election, 80% of military, 57% of federal civilian employees overseas, and 64% of other civilian citizens overseas used the FPCA.

- The general election in 1992 represents the first time that the FVAP electronic transmission system was in use for a presidential election. In sum, 17,523 pages of documents were transmitted between 699 local election offices and potential voters covered by UOCAVA located in the U.S. and 38 other countries. The vast majority of those persons using the electronic transmission system found it easy to use.
- Improvements were made in mailing absentee ballots earlier. The percentage of jurisdictions in which ballots were first mailed in the third week of October declined to 1% compared to 5% in 1988 and for the month as a whole, the percentage fell from 66.6% to 39%. In 1992, 61% of the local election jurisdictions mailed absentee ballots before October 1, almost doubling the 1988 figure of 33%. (See Chart 11, page 19)
- A total of 34% of local election officials counted over 90% of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballots (FWABs) that they received, compared to 25% of local election officials in 1988. This indicates increased understanding by potential voters of the specific use of the FWAB.

Information Support

The Federal Voting Assistance Program's 1992 "Get-Out-The-Vote" Campaign received almost \$450,000,000 worth of public service advertising involving local and national broadcast and print media outlets. The internationally award-winning campaign, sponsored in conjunction with The Advertising Council in New York, was one of the most successful campaigns in the history of The Advertising Council. The International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers (IACREOT) state contacts supported localization of the campaign.

The public service announcements were distributed to over 1,000 television stations and networks including cable; 7,500 radio stations and networks; 1,000 magazines; and over 4,000 newspapers.

Problem Areas

Ballot Transit Time:

While electronic transmission offers an alternative to inadequate ballot transit time in emergency situations, the fact is that insufficient ballot transit time through the mail remains the primary obstacle to ensuring timely delivery of absentee ballots to all who request them.

Communications:

The primary reasons given for not voting by military personnel were that they requested but did not receive an absentee ballot (16%) and they had no candidate preference (16%).

A significant portion of those citizens covered by the Act cited not knowing how to obtain an absentee ballot as the primary reason for not voting. While the figure fell from 12.9% in 1988 to 10% in 1992 for the military, the figure rose for the overseas civilians not affiliated with the federal government from 32.8% in 1988 to 34% in 1992.

The next most cited reason, at 24%, for not voting by these civilian citizens outside the U.S. in 1992 was not thinking they were eligible to vote. This is an increase from 14.8% in 1988.

Procedures:

Fifteen percent of military Unit Voting Assistance Officers and 7% of Embassy/Consulate Voting Assistance Officers cited the requirement of separate FPCA submissions for primary and general elections as a frequent complaint from the citizens they served. This requirement disenfranchises a significant number of voters.

Incomplete Applications:

Seventy-five percent of the local election officials cited incomplete or inadequate home address as a major problem in processing FPCA requests. Other problems indicated were inadequate or illegible mailing address (33%), writing illegible (25%), failure to indicate party preference (23%), form in general not completed (21%), and lack of signature (17%).

INTRODUCTION

This is the fourteenth report since the enactment of the Federal Voting Assistance Act of 1955 and covers 1988 through 1992.

The current program is based on the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) of 1986. The Act authorizes the President to designate the head of a federal department or agency to administer the federal voting assistance responsibilities. The Secretary of Defense is the Presidential designee for administering this Act. The Director of the Federal Voting Assistance Program (FVAP) carries out the federal functions for the Presidential Designee.

The Act requires the states to allow certain citizens to register and vote in federal elections using absentee procedures. These citizens include members of the Armed Forces and the Merchant Marine; the commissioned corps of the Public Health Service; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; their spouses and dependents, and other U.S. citizens residing outside the United States - a total of approximately 6,000,000 eligible voters. In addition to the federal laws governing absentee registration and voting, most states permit these citizens to register for and vote absentee in state and local elections.

Executive Branch departments and agencies with employees overseas provide voting assistance under guidance from the Presidential Designee. These departments and agencies utilize informational materials and services provided by FVAP. The Department of State, through its embassies and consulates, provides absentee voting information and assistance to U.S. citizens outside the United States. In addition the State Department, in selected areas, makes the diplomatic pouch available to voters for sending election materials back to the U.S.

The U.S. Postal Service and the Military Postal Service facilitate the transmission of election materials between the voter and local election officials.

The General Services Administration prints the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) and the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) and distributes these forms upon request from federal departments and agencies.

The U.S. Attorney General is authorized to enforce the provisions of this Act.

FEDERAL VOTING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Federal Voting Assistance Program continually works with state and local election officials, assists states and other U.S. jurisdictions in adopting the mandatory and recommended provisions of the UOCAVA, and advises them on the applicability of Federal laws and regulations to their individual electoral systems. An Ombudsman Service for all persons covered by the Act and for local election officials is also provided. The right of all U.S. citizens to register and vote is publicized to a worldwide audience on a continuous basis.

PROGRESS OF STATES IN IMPLEMENTING THE UNIFORMED AND OVERSEAS CITIZENS ABSENTEE VOTING ACT OF 1986

Significant changes have occurred in the absentee voting procedures implemented by the states in the last four years. These include notable improvements in facilitating absentee voting procedures for persons covered by the Act. The Federal Voting Assistance Program's continual education efforts, in addition to its pursuit of state legislative initiatives, have helped communicate the challenges presented to the military and other civilian citizens outside the U.S. in voting absentee. States have made progress to facilitate absentee voting by these citizens; however, obstacles remain.

There are interstate and intrastate differences in voting procedures which present difficulties for citizens covered by the Act, and are a source of confusion to Voting Assistance Officers and local election officials. Understanding the absentee voting procedures of one state does not necessarily translate into being able to assist a potential voter from another state, and may actually mislead a voter. Furthermore, the lack of uniformity within a state only compounds the confusion by factoring in local election officials, who may not know that different procedures are in effect in different jurisdictions, and therefore may give conflicting advice or require more stringent procedures than are appropriate. In addition, voting and registration procedures may vary for people within the same family, i.e. military and dependents.

The FVAP has undertaken several state legislative initiatives in order to bring simplicity, uniformity and clarity to the absentee voting process.

The two main problems that continue to threaten disenfranchisement are lack of adequate transit time and the use of more than one FPCA to request ballots for different elections in a calendar year. Another significant obstacle is the "not earlier than" restrictions which constrain the time frame in which a ballot application may be made.

The specific initiatives and progress are as follows:

I. Provide Forty-Five Days Transit Time For Absentee Ballots To Military And Overseas Citizens.

Thirty-four states, the District of Columbia, Guam and Puerto Rico now provide forty or more days transit time, either by statute or administrative practice. They are:

Alabama	Iowa	Nebraska	South Carolina
Alaska	Kansas	New Jersey	South Dakota
Connecticut	Kentucky	New Mexico	Texas
District of Columbia	Louisiana	New York	Utah
Florida	Maryland	North Carolina	Virginia
Georgia	Massachusetts	North Dakota	West Virginia
Guam	Michigan	Ohio	Wyoming
Idaho	Mississippi	Oregon	
Illinois	Missouri	Pennsylvania	
Indiana	Montana	Puerto Rico	

II. Consider A Single FPCA Ballot Application To Serve As A Request For All Elections Held During The Calendar Year.

This initiative is particularly important because, despite notice to the contrary, many citizens mistakenly believe that a request for a primary ballot serves simultaneously as a request for a general election ballot. Forty-four states, the District of Columbia, Guam and the Virgin Islands now have enacted this legislation:

Alabama	Idaho	Montana	South Dakota
Alaska	Illinois	Nebraska	Tennessee
Arkansas	Indiana	Nevada	Texas
Arizona	Iowa	New Hampshire	Utah
California	Kansas	New Jersey	Vermont
Colorado	Louisiana	New York	Virgin Islands
Delaware	Maine	North Carolina	Virginia
District of Columbia	Maryland	North Dakota	Washington
Florida	Massachusetts	Ohio	West Virginia
Georgia	Michigan	Oklahoma	Wisconsin
Guam	Minnesota	Oregon	Wyoming
Hawaii	Missouri	South Carolina	

III. Accept The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) As A Combination Registration And Request For Absentee Ballots.

An improvement over previous years, no states require separate FPCAs to both register and request an absentee ballot. Forty-eight states, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands send a ballot in response to a single FPCA for most citizens covered under the Act. Only six states still require some sort of state form in addition to the FPCA to register, and these only for a specific groups of citizens covered under the Act. Overall progress has been good, but the need for more uniformity is apparent.

Following are the six remaining states that still require that some citizens covered under the Act submit a state form in addition to the FPCA in order to register:

Delaware	Pennsylvania
Kentucky	Rhode Island
New Hampshire	Utah

IV. Remove The Notary Requirement On Any Election Materials; Replace With Self Administered Oath, If Necessary.

Almost all states have enacted this legislation, and with enactment of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, all states will be required to lift notary requirements on all registration materials.

Upon encouragement from the FVAP, however, 41 states and the District of Columbia have already lifted notary requirements on all election materials for citizens covered by the Act:

Alaska	Indiana	Nevada	South Dakota
Arizona	Iowa	New Jersey	Tennessee
Arkansas	Kansas	New Mexico	Texas
California	Kentucky	New York	Utah
Connecticut	Louisiana	North Carolina	Virginia
Delaware	Maine	North Dakota	Washington
District of Columbia	Maryland	Ohio	West Virginia
Florida	Massachusetts	Oklahoma	Wisconsin
Georgia	Minnesota	Oregon	Wyoming
Hawaii	Montana	Pennsylvania	
Idaho	Nebraska	South Carolina	

V. Eliminate Any "Not Earlier Than" Acceptance Dates For Registration Or Absentee Ballot Requests.

Some states have specified dates to accept requests for registration and/or absentee ballots. This "not earlier than" limitation causes a problem for citizens covered by the Act. Motivational programs on voting are held at various times during an election year. At these sessions, personnel are encouraged to submit an application for registration and/or request for an absentee ballot. Persons such as these who are motivated to act early in the election year could meet the unfortunate circumstance of having their applications rejected because they were received too early by local election officials.

The following 38 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands have lifted "not earlier than" restrictions for citizens covered by the Act:

Alabama	Illinois	Montana	Pennsylvania
Alaska	Iowa	Nebraska	Puerto Rico
Arizona	Kansas	Nevada	Rhode Island
California	Kentucky	New Hampshire	South Carolina
Colorado	Louisiana	New Jersey	South Dakota
Connecticut	Maine	New Mexico	Utah
Delaware	Maryland	New York	Vermont
District of Columbia	Massachusetts	North Carolina	Virgin Islands
Florida	Minnesota	North Dakota	Wyoming
Idaho	Mississippi	Oklahoma	
Indiana	Missouri	Oregon	

VI. Establish Late Registration Procedures For Persons Recently Separated From The Military, Who Go Through A Transition Period And May Not Know In Which Jurisdiction They Will Live.

Often the date of discharge and a state's registration requirements combine to disenfranchise a discharged military member. Special procedures to allow these persons to register and vote would solve this problem. Fifteen states currently allow such procedures:

California	Maryland	North Carolina	Oregon
Connecticut	Massachusetts	North Dakota	Virginia
Illinois	Montana	Ohio	Wyoming
Kansas	New Jersey	Oklahoma	

VII. Provide For State Special Write In Absentee Ballot.

The purpose of the state special write-in absentee ballot is to provide a method for voting by military and other persons overseas who, due to military contingencies or special circumstances such as those faced by submariners, Peace Corps volunteers and others in remote areas, will be out of communication for extended periods of time and unable to receive regular absentee ballots sent in the normal time frame.

This state special write-in absentee ballot is provided by the states 90 days before an election, and allows the voter to write in the names of candidates or the party for whom he or she wishes to vote in the election. This ballot generally provides a full slate of offices to be voted upon, including federal, state and local offices.

This state special write-in ballot is not to be confused with the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) which is used as a back-up ballot only from overseas and only if the regularly requested absentee ballot is delayed or not received in a timely manner.

The following 23 states have special write-in ballots:

Alaska	Indiana	New Hampshire	Tennessee
Arizona	Iowa	North Dakota	Utah
California	Louisiana	Oklahoma	Virginia
Colorado	Maine	Oregon	Washington
Connecticut	Missouri	Pennsylvania	Wisconsin
Georgia	Nebraska	South Carolina	

VIII. Incorporate Reference To The Uniformed And Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) Into State Election Code.

In 1986, Congress updated and consolidated the provisions of the Federal Voting Assistance Act of 1955 and the Overseas Citizens Voting Rights Act of 1975 into the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA). Citation of this Act in state election codes helps state election officials and interested citizens find guidance to applicable federal law and increases their familiarity with the statute and its applications. Twenty-three states, the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands have incorporated reference to the UOCAVA into their state election codes:

Arizona	Hawaii	Ohio	Virginia
California	Indiana	Oklahoma	West Virginia
Colorado	Kansas	Oregon	Wisconsin
Connecticut	Montana	South Carolina	Wyoming
Delaware	Nebraska	South Dakota	
District of Columbia	Nevada	Utah	
Georgia	New Jersey	Virgin Islands	

IX. Allow The Use Of Electronic Transmission Of Election Materials.

The electronic transmission of election materials was first undertaken in 1990 during Desert Shield as an emergency measure to assure that American military personnel in the Persian Gulf were not disenfranchised. Since that time, the use of electronic transmission has expanded, and 1992 marked the first use of the system during a Presidential election year. To date, thirty-two states, American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam and the Virgin Islands allow citizens covered by the Act to benefit from the electronic transmission of election materials:

American Samoa	Guam	Minnesota	Oklahoma
Arizona	Hawaii	Mississippi	Oregon
Arkansas	Idaho	Montana	Texas
California	Illinois	Nebraska	Utah
Colorado	Indiana	Nevada	Vermont
Connecticut	Iowa	New Jersey	Virgin Islands
Delaware	Louisiana	New York	Virginia
District of Columbia	Massachusetts	North Dakota	Washington
Georgia	Michigan	Ohio	Wisconsin

X. Expand The Use Of The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), To Include Special, Primary And Runoff Elections, And To Allow The FWAB To Be Used As A Simultaneous Registration Application and Ballot.

The Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) is a federal ballot designed for use by military stationed overseas and other civilian overseas citizens who have already applied for a regular absentee ballot. If the regular absentee ballot does not arrive timely, these voters may obtain the FWAB, vote it by writing in names of candidates or political parties and return the FWAB to the local election official. It is often referred to as the "emergency ballot."

Currently, the FWAB , which is prepositioned overseas, may be used only in general elections. By expanding its use to include special, primary and runoff elections, citizens would not be disenfranchised because regular

ballots are not received in a timely manner. Three states have expanded the FWAB's use to include elections other than the general election:

Montana
Virginia
West Virginia

XI. Provide The State's Chief Election Official With Emergency Authority During Periods Of Declared Emergency.

Six states and the District of Columbia have designated a chief election official to work with FVAP to establish expeditious methods for handling absentee ballots during declared emergencies:

Colorado	Iowa
District of Columbia	Missouri
Hawaii	Tennessee
Indiana	

PROGRAM RESULTS

Analysis of the 1992 Post Election Survey indicates that there were significant increases in voting participation by citizens covered by the Act, and improved satisfaction with assistance and services provided by FVAP.

Post Election Surveys

The 1992 Post-Election Surveys were conducted to 1) determine participation in the electoral process by citizens covered by the Act, 2) assess the impact of efforts designed to simplify and ease the process of voting absentee, 3) evaluate other progress made to facilitate absentee participation, and 4) identify any remaining obstacles to voting by these citizens.

In order to perform a comprehensive evaluation of the success of the Federal Voting Assistance Program and the obstacles which remain with absentee voting, six individual surveys were conducted to obtain information from 1) members of the military in the U.S. and overseas, 2) federal civilian employees overseas, 3) other civilian citizens overseas, 4) military Unit Voting Assistance Officers, 5) State Department Voting Assistance Officers, and 6) local election officials charged with processing applications and forwarding registration materials and absentee ballots.

Citizens in categories 1), 2) and 3) were queried regarding their voting activity, if any, and were asked to evaluate sources of assistance and information utilized. Respondents who reported that they did not vote were asked to provide reasons for not voting. Military Unit Voting Assistance Officers are the primary source of voting assistance for members of the military and their spouses and dependents. They were surveyed to determine the scope of their voting assistance efforts, the type of assistance provided, and difficulties experienced.

State Department Voting Assistance Officers provide voting assistance through American embassies and consulates around the world and are the principle source of voting assistance for civilian U.S. citizens outside the United States. They were asked to indicate the services provided through their respective posts, and any difficulties encountered in providing absentee voting assistance to U.S. citizens abroad.

The survey of local election officials requested information on voting in general, absentee voting in particular, and problems associated with handling requests and ballots from citizens covered by the Act.

Chart 1 indicates voting behavior by the various groups surveyed. While participation by the general population increased slightly in the 1992 election, military voting participation notably increased. The major factor in this significant rise can be attributed directly to the command support and emphasis on the voting program by each Service and the States'

progress in simplifying their absentee voting procedures. (See section on Progress of States on page 2)

Charts 1 and 3 reflect a 15% increase in voting between 1988 and 1992 among federal civilian employees working overseas. They also reflect that the percentage of voters who attempted to vote but were unsuccessful remained stable at its lowest point recorded to date, 7%, indicating the continued success of the voting assistance training provided through the FVAP.

Overall, 81% military personnel (67% weighted) and 72% federal civilian employees reported that they participated in the 1992 general election. The military participation figure represents a continual increase in voter participation by the military which has consistently exceeded voting by the general population in Presidential elections since 1984.

Fifty-two percent of military respondents to the survey reported they had one or more dependents eligible to vote residing with them. Of these dependents, 76% (61% weighted) were reported to have voted in the 1992 Presidential election. This represents an increase from 59.7% in the 1988 general election.

Voting participation by civilian citizens overseas not affiliated with the federal government went from 38% in 1988 to 31% in 1992. This represents 25% who voted absentee, 2% who voted at the polls, and an additional 5% that applied for an absentee ballot but did not receive it in time to vote. This last category of participants has decreased slightly from the 1988 figure of 6%. This downward trend in the number of unsuccessful attempts to vote indicates an improvement in understanding the absentee voting process, states simplifying procedures and the FVAP educational efforts.

Based on statistics from the Federal Election Commission, 55.3% of the U.S. civilian voting age population voted in the 1992 general election, representing an approximate 5% increase from the 1988 figure of 50%.

Chart 4 indicates the strong correlation between age and voting in the military. At each age range, the proportion voting increases progressively from 39% in the 18 - 20 year olds to 89% in those 45 years old and older. In addition, there is a larger number of unsuccessful voters under 25 years old, compared to those 25 and older.

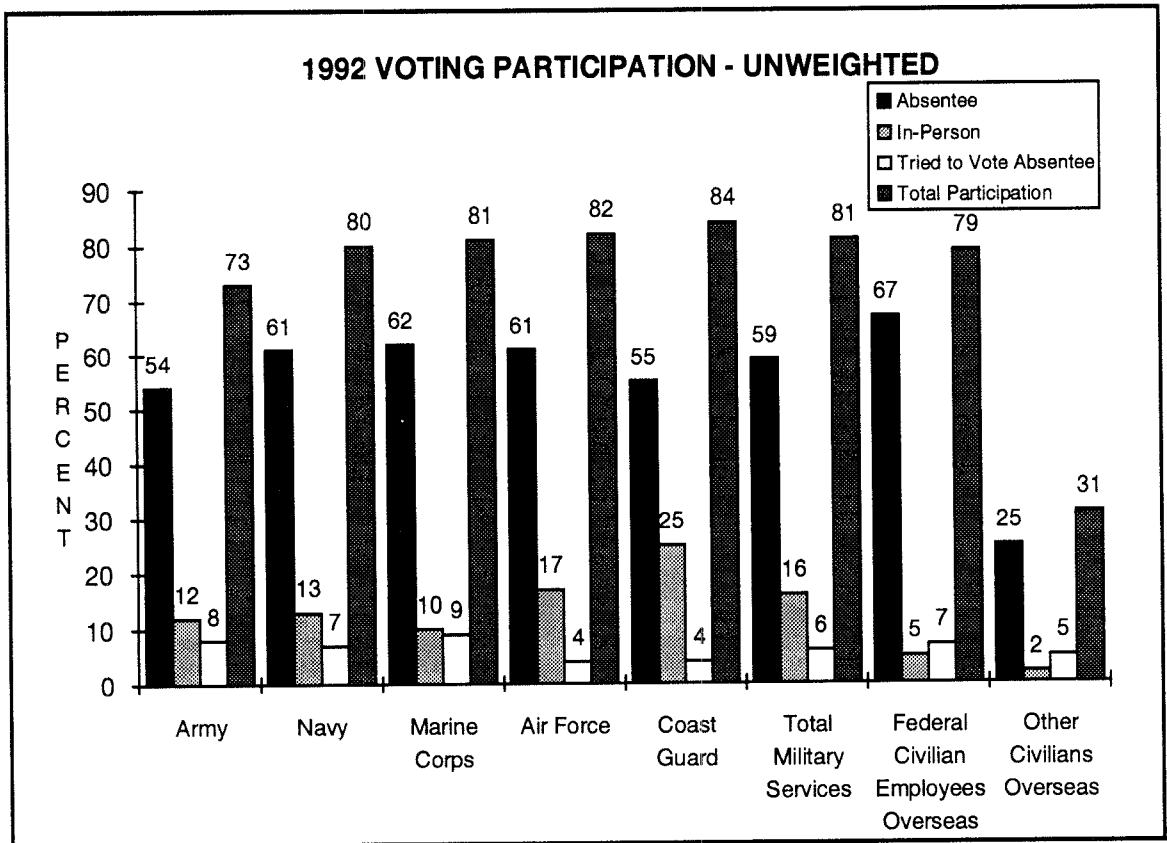


Chart 1

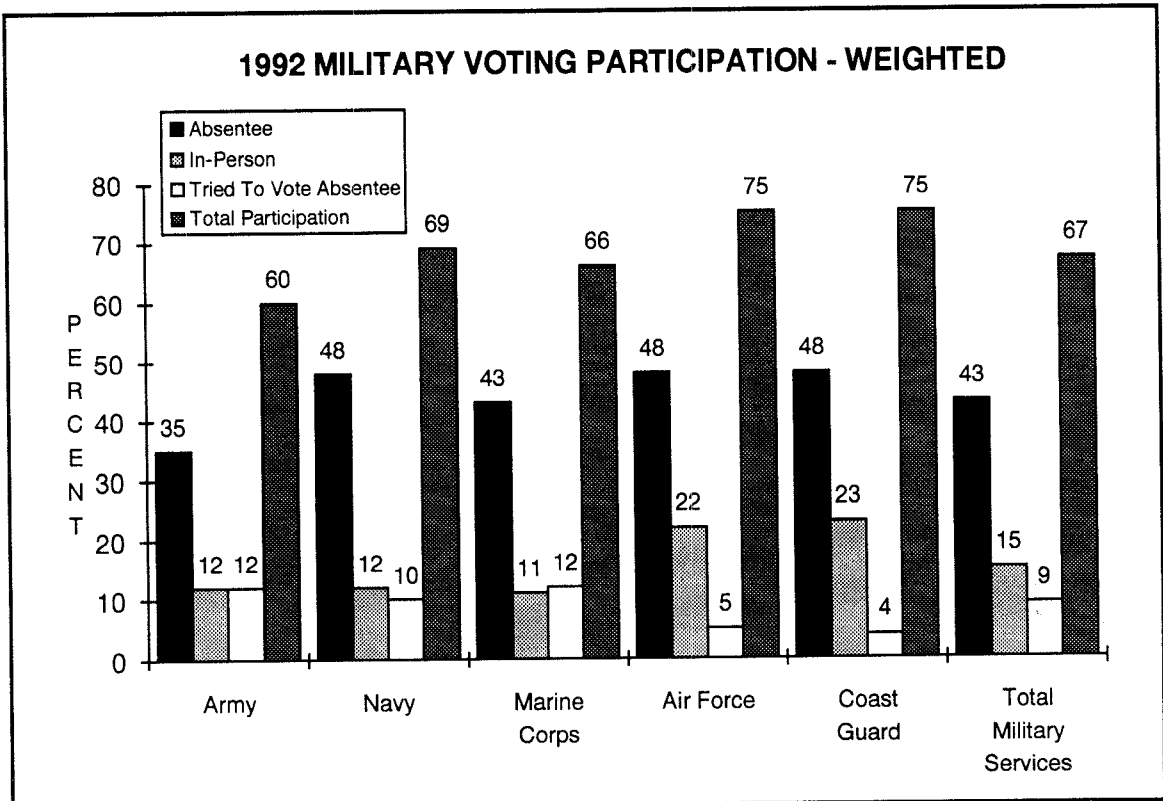


Chart 2

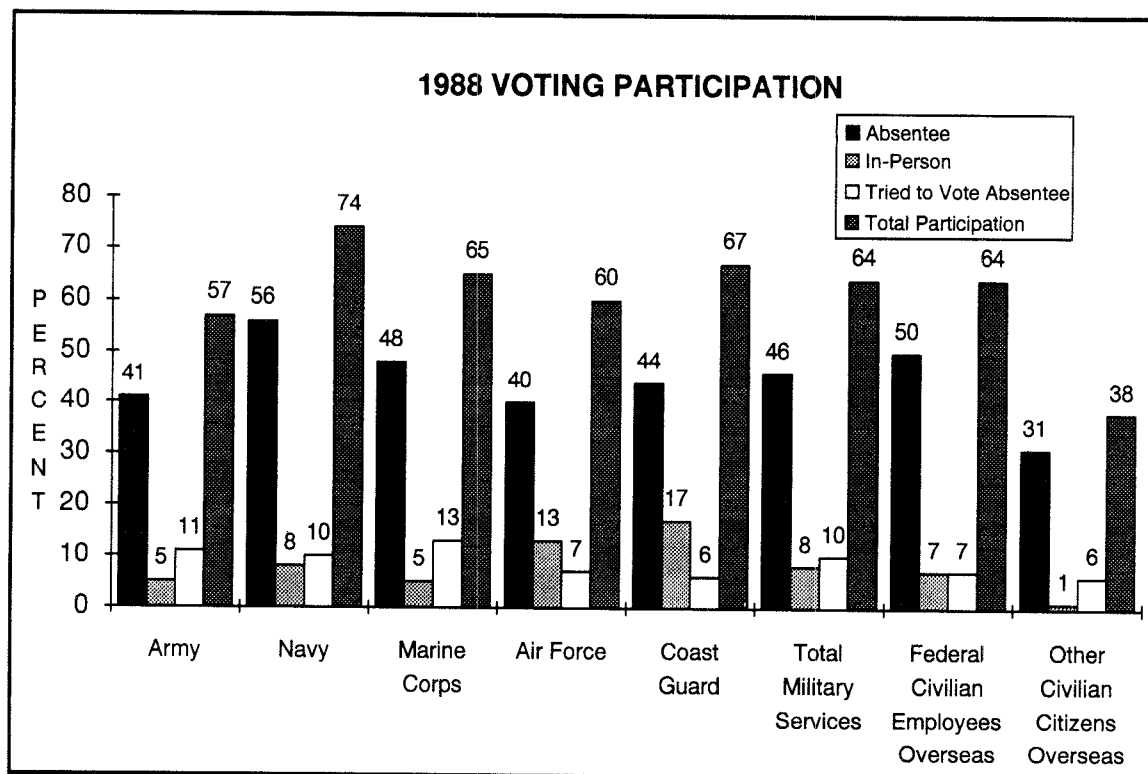


Chart 3

Officers in the military are generally older than junior grade enlisted personnel. Rank thus becomes a significant indicator in accounting for differences in voting across the Services. Compared to 1988, the percentage of military personnel that unsuccessfully tried to vote has fallen in each category of rank, except in the lowest ranking enlisted category (E1-E4) and the lowest officer rank (O1-O3), in which it remains unchanged. This is attributed to improvement in the assistance offered to military personnel by the Unit Voting Assistance Officers and the command support, as well as to the less cumbersome absentee voting procedures adopted by the States.

Another element associated with likelihood to vote is geographic mobility. Persons residing in the same location for a longer period of time are more likely to vote in an election than those who have been at their current duty station for a shorter period. Thus, duration at duty station is another variable that affects voting. In 1992, military personnel who had been at their duty stations for more than 37 months had both the highest voter participation rates and the highest rates of successful voting. Among federal civilian employees overseas, those with the highest voting rate and the lowest rate of unsuccessful attempts to vote were those at their present duty stations between ten and twelve months.

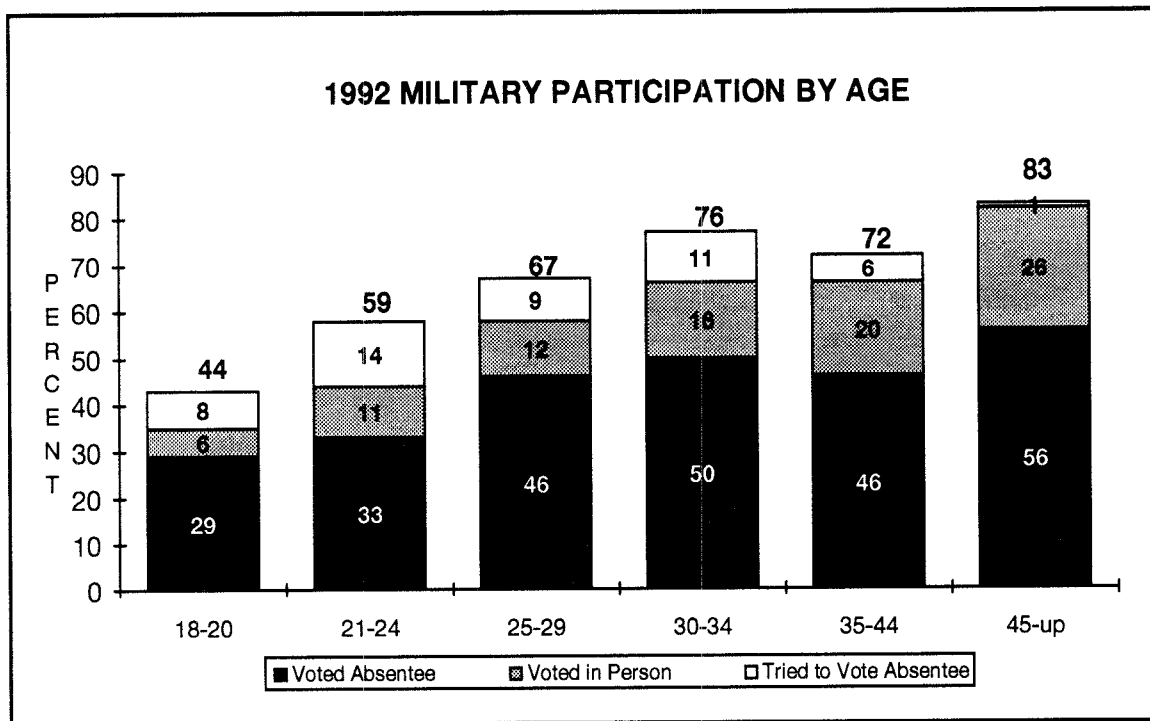


Chart 4

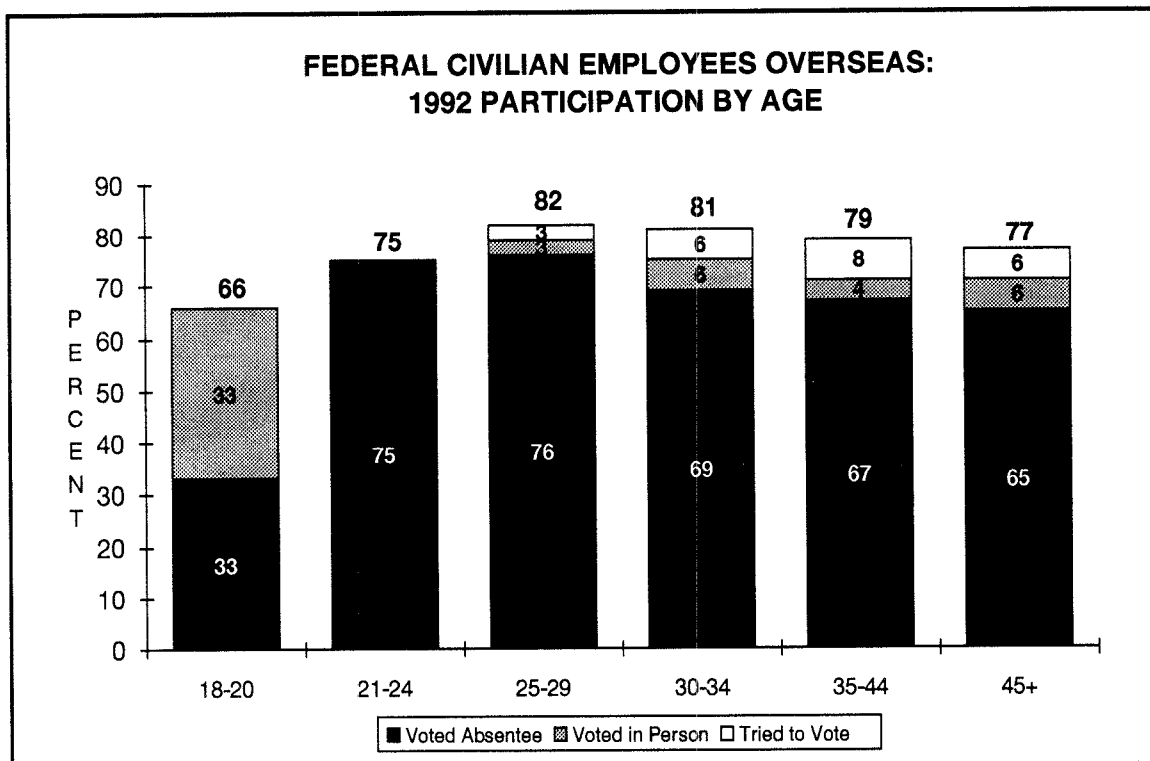


Chart 5

Approximately 76% of the military sample were located inside the U.S. or in U.S. territories at the time of the election and subsequent survey; the remainder were located overseas. All of the federal civilian sample and the sample of overseas civilians not affiliated with the federal government were outside the U.S. and U.S. territories at the time of the election and survey.

The survey findings indicate relationships between voting and other demographic indicators such as age, rank, time at duty station and location of duty station in the 1992 general election. The surveys also prove that an effective voter information and education program with proper command and agency support can overcome normal tendencies of the U.S. electorate.

The Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) continued to be the primary tool used by military Service members to register to vote and to request an absentee ballot. Ninety-seven percent of the military personnel acquired the FPCA through military channels. The FPCA was used by 57% of the federal civilian employees overseas who requested a ballot. Seventy percent of these obtained the FPCA through military channels, while 23% obtained the form from the U.S. embassy or consulate. Sixty-four percent of those other civilian citizens overseas who requested a ballot used an FPCA to do so. Seventy-eight percent of these obtained the form from a U.S. embassy or consulate, and 2% obtained it through U.S. military channels.

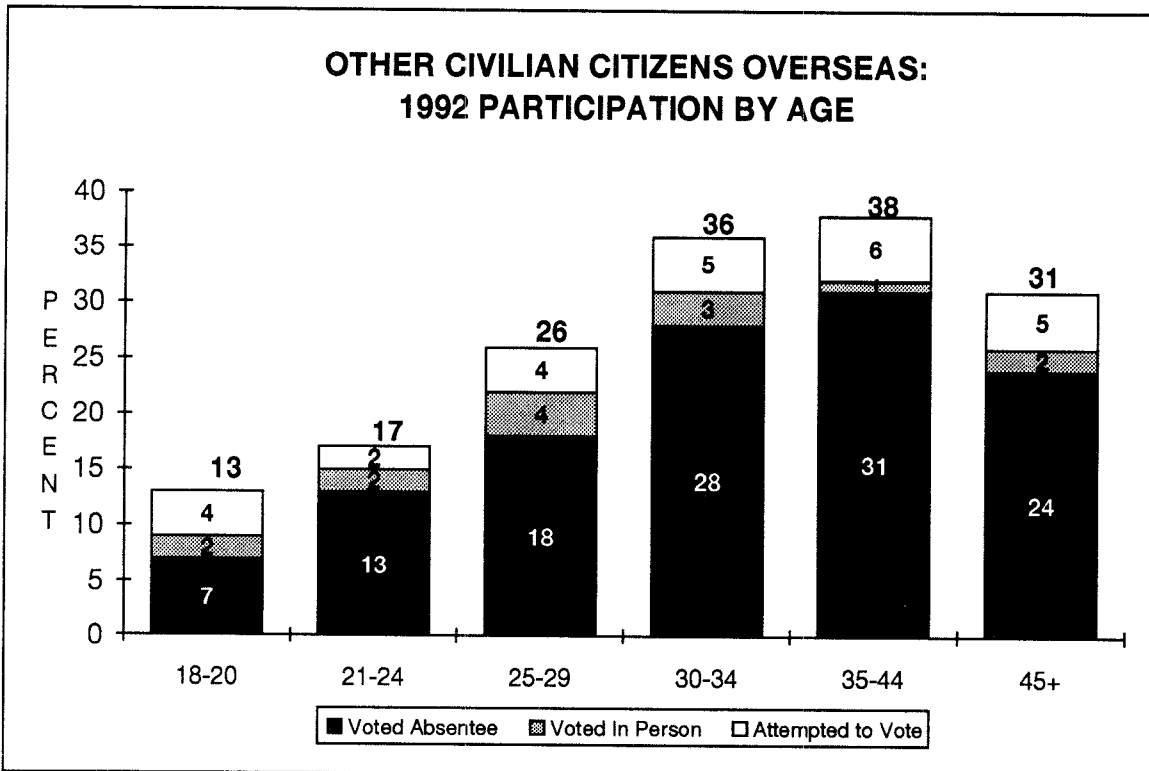


Chart 6

Sources of Voting Assistance

Citizens covered by the Act were asked about sources of information consulted to assist them in participating in the electoral process and about their overall satisfaction with the assistance received. The majority of military personnel reported using the Unit Voting Assistance Officer as the primary source of information, and across the Services, 93% were satisfied with the quality of assistance given by the Unit Voting Assistance Officer. In 1988, 85.6% were satisfied with the assistance provided by the Unit Voting Assistance Officer. Of those military personnel who used the *Voting Assistance Guide* in 1992, 91% rated it as a good source of assistance. Of those that did not use the *Guide*, 48% indicated that they had all the information they needed from the Unit Voting Assistance Officer and other sources, and thus did not need to consult the *Guide*.

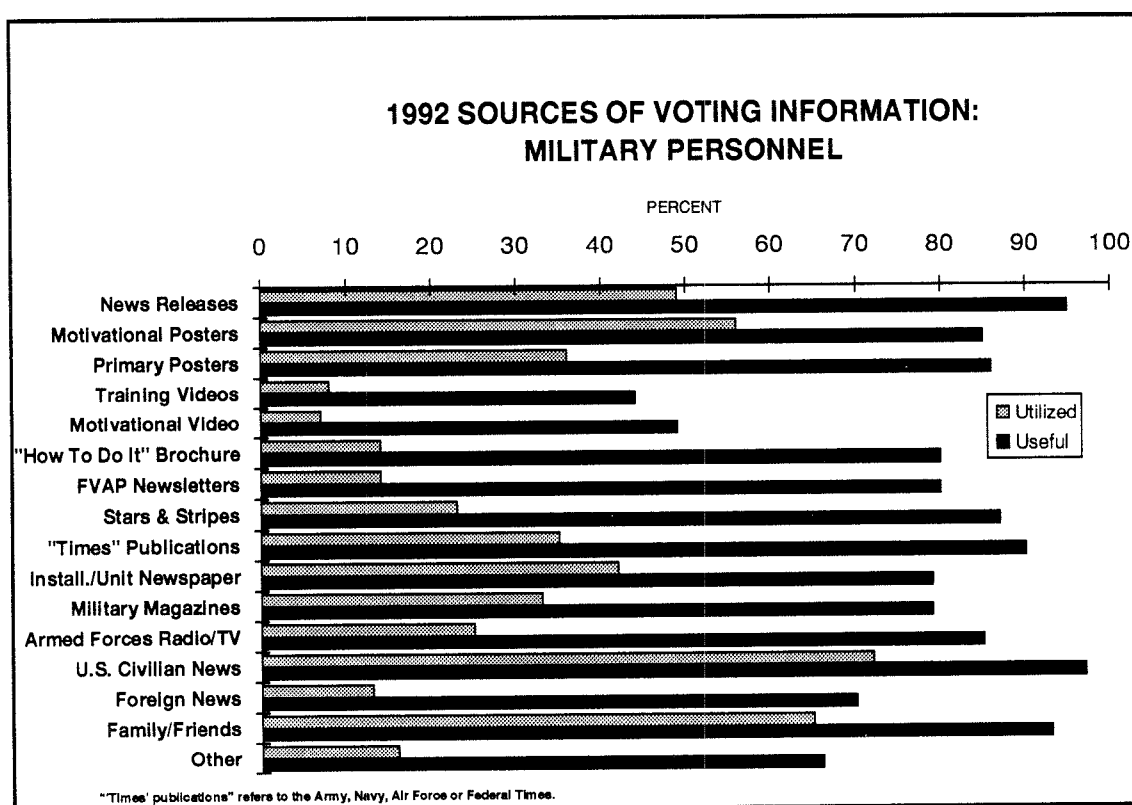


Chart 7

For civilian citizens overseas not affiliated with the federal government, Embassy and Consulate Voting Assistance Officers are the primary source of assistance and information about absentee voting. In 1992, 88% of those using Embassy and Consulate Voting Assistance Officers were satisfied with the assistance rendered. In 1988, 57% found the assistance provided by the embassy or consulate to be useful. Twenty-six percent of these citizens used the *Voting Assistance Guide* in 1992, with 87% of them rating the *Guide* as a good source of assistance.

Thirty-seven percent of federal civilian employees overseas cited federal agencies as the primary source of assistance and information about absentee voting, while 22% cited the U.S. embassy or consulate. In 1992, 85% of those seeking voting assistance from federal agencies and 84% of those obtaining assistance from the U.S. embassy or consulate were satisfied with the assistance provided. Thirty-four percent in 1988 found the assistance provided by the embassy or consulate to be useful. Of the federal civilian employees overseas who used the *Voting Assistance Guide* in 1992, 87% rated it as a good source of assistance. Of those that did not use the *Guide*, 49% indicated that they had all the information they needed from Voting Assistance Officers and other sources, and thus did not need to consult the *Guide*.

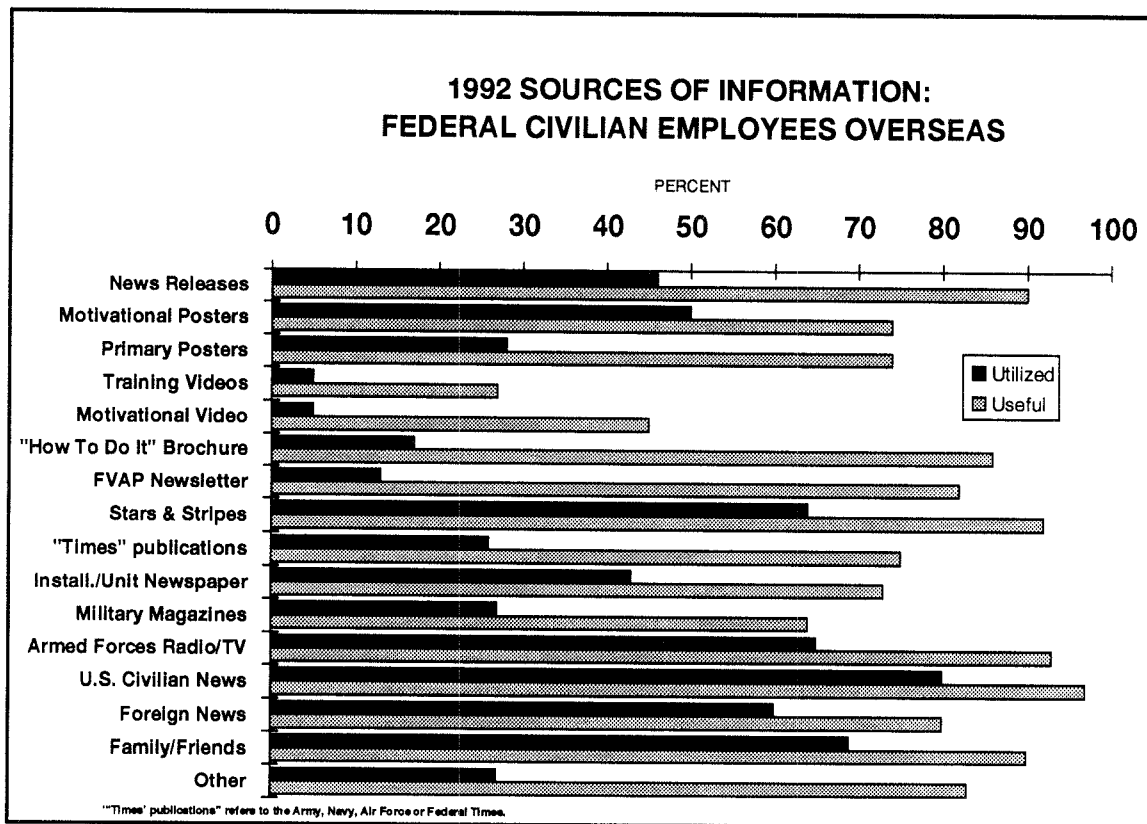


Chart 8

The *Voting Information Newsletter* is a new source of assistance introduced since the 1988 general election. Sixty percent of the Unit Voting Assistance Officers for the military rated it as a useful publication. Ninety-seven percent of the Embassy/Consulate Voting Assistance Officers received the *Newsletter*, finding the most useful features to be the specific information, instructions and guidelines provided. Eighty-two percent of federal civilian employees overseas who had access to the *Newsletter* reported it to be useful.

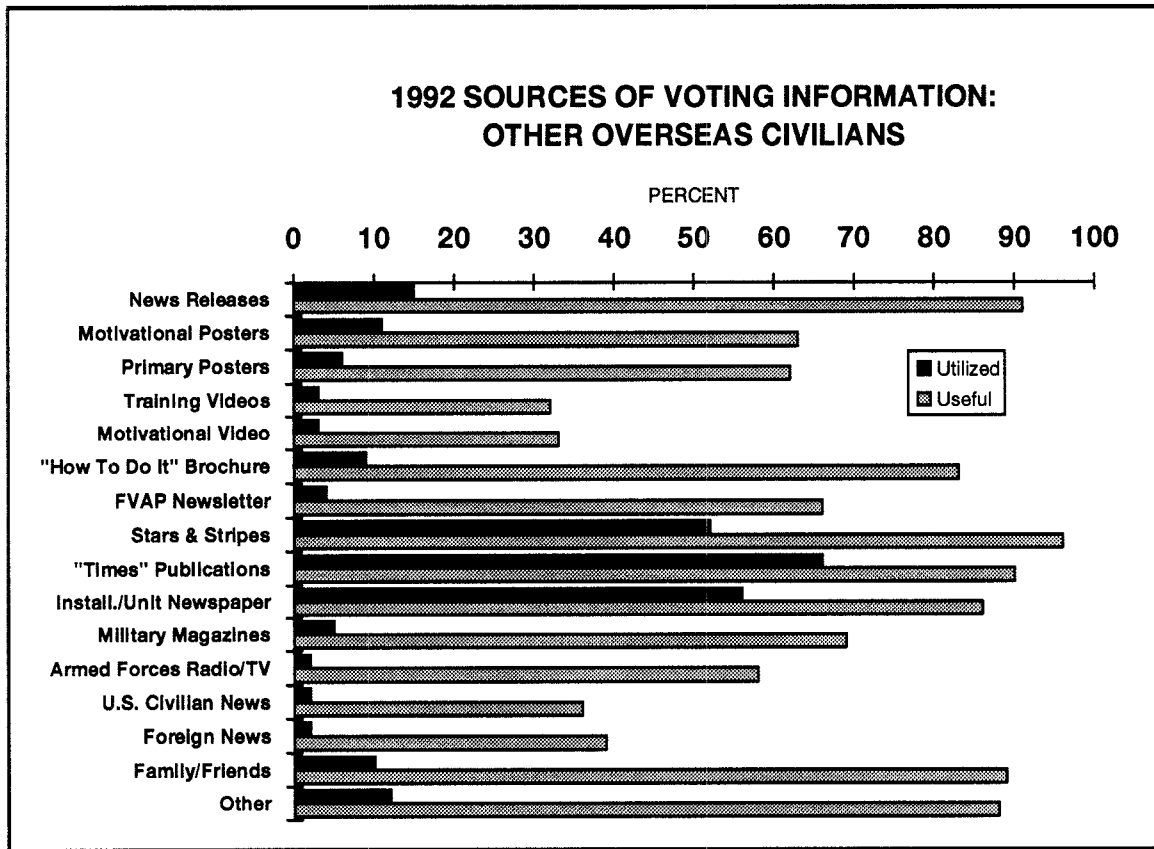


Chart 9

Interest in Election

Only one percent of the federal civilian employees overseas, 3% of other civilian citizens overseas and 5% of the military personnel reported being not interested in the election. This represents some of the lowest levels of non-interest in federal elections since this question has been posited to these populations, mirroring the resurgence of interest in politics reported in the general population in 1992.

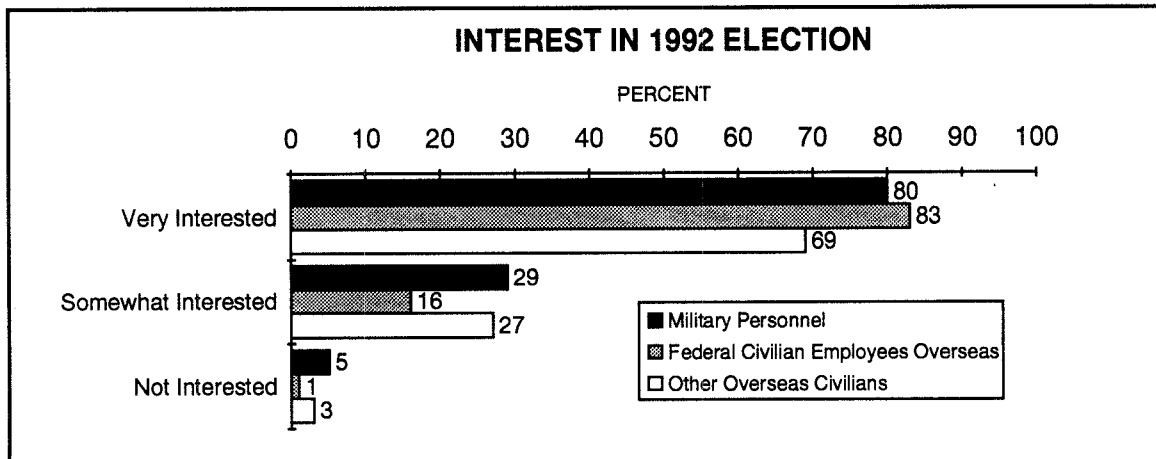


Chart 10

Transit Time

Insufficient ballot transit time is a primary cause of disenfranchisement for absentee voters. As described in the "Progress of the States" portion of this report, a minimum transit time of 45 days is desired in order for an absentee voter to request the ballot, vote it and return in time to be counted. Therefore, while state and local election officials are encouraged to mail out absentee ballots as early as possible to citizens who have requested them (See Chart 11, page 19), citizens themselves are also encouraged to submit applications for an absentee ballot as soon as possible in order to create as wide a window as possible to allow for ballot transit time.

Approximately 74% of the military personnel submitted their absentee ballot requests before October. Sensitive to international mailing time frames, 85% of the civilian applicants who are federal civilian employees overseas and 82% of other civilian citizens overseas submitted their requests for ballots before October.

In response to this application for an absentee ballot, local election officials mail an absentee ballot to properly registered applicants for voting. Twenty-four percent of military personnel received their absentee ballots before the end of September, while most of the military absentee ballots were received during October (70%). This pattern is repeated with the federal civilian employees overseas, of whom 21% received their absentee ballots before the end of September, and an additional 75% received them during October. Among other civilian citizens overseas, 14% received their absentee ballots before the end of September and 73% received their ballots during October. It is significant to note that although only 1% of local election officials mailed out absentee ballots during the last week of October or later, a full 12% of civilian citizens overseas not affiliated with the federal government received their absentee ballots during November or later, thus proving the need for the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot.

Only a small percent of the absentee ballots from military and civilian personnel were received too late to be counted. Overall, 69% of local election officials reported that less than 5% of the ballots were received too late to be counted. This is compared to 1988, in which 71% percent of the officials reported less than 5% of the ballots were received too late to be counted.

It is useful to ascertain the reasons why citizens covered by the Act did not participate in the 1992 election to determine whether non participation is intended by the citizen, or if citizen desires and attempts to vote are thwarted in some way by procedural obstacles or lack of information.

As in the military, Embassy/Consulate Voting Assistance Officers cited help with the FPCA as one of the most frequent calls for assistance, with 74% citing providing the FPCA as a prevalent request, followed by requests for general information, 62%. Again, reflecting a similar pattern in the military, Embassy/Consulate Voting Assistance Officers cited long delays in receiving a response to the FPCA (55%), not knowing if the FPCA was received by election officials (34%), confusing residency requirements (22%) and inadequate information on candidates and issues (22%) as the most persistent complaints.

LOCAL ELECTION OFFICIALS

The local election officials are the individuals who administer an election on the local level in counties, cities, townships and other jurisdictions within the U.S. These officials were queried in 1992 regarding their perspective on the absentee voting process, its level of success and recommendations for further improvements.

Among the sampled jurisdictions, absentee votes accounted for an average of 10% of all votes cast, a considerable portion.

As discussed, lack of adequate ballot transit time is a primary cause of disenfranchisement among absentee voters. (See Transit Time, page 18) As stated above, a transit time of 45 days is desired in order for an absentee voter to request the ballot, vote it and return it in time to be counted. The majority of local election officials, 61%, began mailing absentee ballots before the end of September. This is a significant improvement over the 1988 comparable figure of 33%.

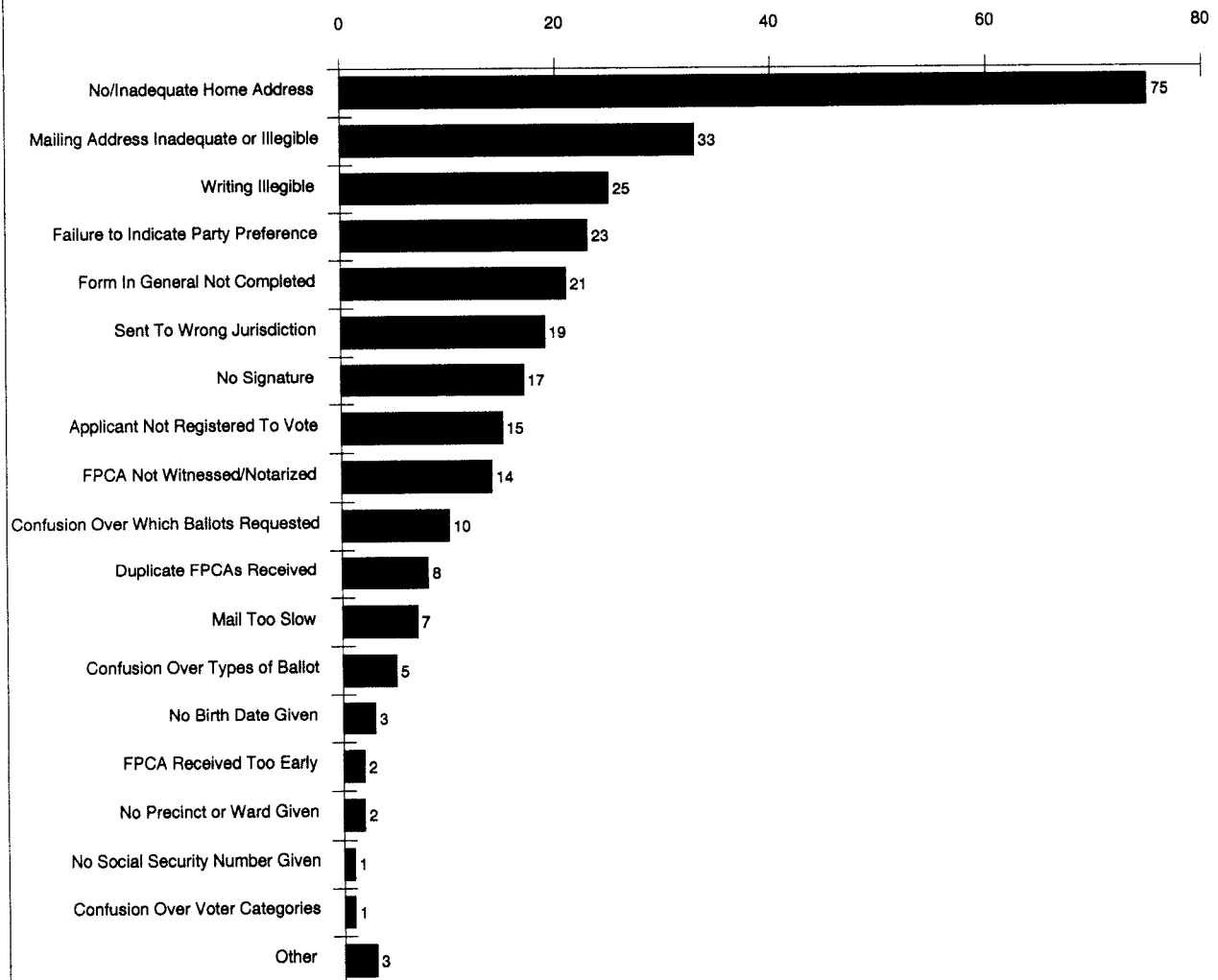
Eighty-two percent of local election officials that utilized the FVAP Ombudsman Service were satisfied with the assistance it provided them in administering elections for citizens covered by the Act.

Approximately 4% of absentee ballots were voted and returned, but arrived too late to be counted. This represents a nominal decline from 4.8% in 1988.

The more frequent problems reported by local election officials in processing FPCAs were no/inadequate home address provided by the voter (75%), mailing address indicated was inadequate or illegible (33%) and writing in general was illegible. (See Chart 13, page 24)

The 1992 Survey was the first one in which local election officials were queried regarding their use of electronic transmission. The majority of officials utilizing the system were satisfied with its ease of use. (See section on Electronic Transmission, page 20)

PROBLEMS EXPERIENCED IN PROCESSING FPCAs



Because multiple responses were allowed, the percentages sum to more than 100%.

Chart 13